

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2226

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, CS, PORG
SUBJ: COSTA RICAN AMBASSADOR TO UN RODOLFO PIZA

1. RODOLFO PIZA ESCALANTE, COSTA RICA'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE UN, IS A NOTED LAWYER, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, AND EX-DEPUTY (1974-78) IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE HAS HELD A VARIETY OF GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS INCLUDING ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL AND CHIEF OF CONSULAR DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE HAS COUNTED AMONG HIS LAW FIRM'S CLIENTS THE UNITED FRUIT COMPANY AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MULTINATIONALS.

2. PIZA, 48, WAS EDUCATED IN COSTA RICA AND IN SPAIN, WHERE HE HAS AN MA AND A PHD IN LAW FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID. HE IS FLUENT IN ENGLISH. HIS WIFE, MARIA DEL CARMEN ROCAFORT MARIN, IS SPANISH. THEY HAVE 5 CHILDREN, ONE OF WHOM STUDIES IN NEW YORK. MRS PIZA ALSO SPEAKS ENGLISH.

3. PIZA HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL. HE IS OUTSPOKEN. HE HAS A TMEPER. HE IS A VERY GOOD SPEAKER. HE TAKES ON ISSUES ON PRINCIPLE--HE WAS ONE OF THE DEFENDERS OF A COSTA RICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT, ADMITTEDLY A COMMUNIST, WHO WAS JAILED IN NICARAGUA (PIZA IS AN AVOWED ANIT-COMMUNIST). PIZA IS ALSO ONE OF VISCO'S MOST VEHEMENT PUBLIC CRITICS IN COSTA RICA.

4. PIZA IS FRIENDLY TO THE US, BUT DOES NOT SUPPORT THE US ON ALL
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THE ISSUES. AT TIMES HE SHOOTS FROM THESLIP. HE IS TENACIOUS IN DEBATE--A GOOD MAN TO HAE ON YOUR SIDE, AND TOUGH IN THE OPPOSITION. POLITICALLY, PIZA IS SLIGHTLY RIGHT OF CENTER.

5. ON DISARMAMENT ISSUES, PIZA IS LARGELY UNLETTERED. HE HAS OPPOSED THE US STANCESON THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE, AND MIGHT SPEAK OUT ON IT. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, PIZA IS OPEN MINDED, AND

ANXIOUS FOR INTERCHANGE OF OPINIONS. HE WILL ALSO READ WHAT IS
GIVEN TO HIM.

6. PIZA DRINKS AND SMOKES, AND ENJOYS A GOOD PARTY. HE LIKES
AMERICANS, AND HAS GOOD AMERICAN FRIENDS (AND CLIENTS) LOCALLY. HE
IS WIDELY TRAVELLED (EUROPE, ASIA), INCLUDING A 30 DAY IV PROGRAM
IN 1974 SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
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